1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

1897 and some time later they came to visit him at Fort Young. Deare gave them presents, presumably to gain their support for his own enterprises, and makes no mention of their seeing Mpezeni.[82] Undi was the chief who claimed part of Mpezeni's country in his treaty with Sharpe and who in 1892, when Foà was living in his village, was raided by Ngoni several times a month.[83] Thus the Europeans in Ngoniland were affiliated not only to European groups in Nyasaland and in England out of direct touch with Mpezeni but also with African groups with whom he was in contact. There was an essential contradiction in the situation in which, for example, Deare was friendly with both Mpezeni and Undi while Mpezeni was at war with Undi. Everywhere, not only in Nyasaland, the traditional Ngoni pattern of external relations was becoming incompatible with their relations with Europeans in their midst.

The leader of the opposition to the North Charterland was Nsingu, Mpezeni's heir.[84] Nsngu was at first friendly towards Warton but later his attitude changed. Deare, before establishing the North Charterland camp in 1896, had passed through Nsingu's village, by Ngoni standards an insulting thing to do, and later quarrelled with him, finally flogging him.[85] Genthe, the German traveller, met Nsingu on a path and only grudgingly gave way to let him pass.[86] While Mpezeni remained comparatively friendly, Nsingu and the warriors whose interests he came to represent became increasingly hostile towards all Europeans. At the same time Mpezeni's control over his lieutenants seems not to have been effective, as evidenced by his apparent inability to prevent unauthorized raiding. Deare, according to his own account, enjoyed Mpezeni's favour and was almost forced to marry one of his daughters, and yet Mashanga, the second lieutenant of segment 10, twice tried to kill him.[87] According to Genthe, Mpezeni sent repeatedly for some army leaders who had been raiding and they failed to appear. This may have been deliberate procrastination arranged by Mpezeni, who treated him coldly, but Genthe thought that Mpezeni was only a dummy whose lieutenants did what they liked.[88] With Deare there seems to have been a genuine difference in attitude between Mashanga on the one side and on the other Mpezeni, supported by Mzekwani, the first lieutenant over

[82] Deare, 'Slave raiders', 4 May.
[83] Foà, *Le Nyassa*, pp. 280–1.
[84] Poole, *Native tribes*, p. 13.
[85] Deare, 'Slave raiders', 27 April.
[86] *B.C.A.G.*, iv, 13 (1 August 1897), p. 1.
[87] Deare, 'Slave raiders', 11 May. cf. Wiese, 'Expedição', p. 470.
[88] Genthe, 'Mpezeni's'.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

and is not to be treated as if he were the mere husband of a kinswoman. Indeed, all marital affairs of chiefs tend to have political significance; they are much discussed in the tribe and are the particular concern of senior lieutenants of counties. A recent incident illustrates how in relations with his affines a chief is bound by the instructions of his political advisers. A chief hit his wife while drinking beer in her brother's house. Her father reprimanded him. At a meeting held to discuss the quarrel, the county lieutenants and a kinsman of the chief, his father's deputy, ordered the woman's father to pay two beasts to the chief. The chief himself said nothing. A week or so later the man offered the beasts to the chief who said he did not want them. Just over a year later the chief's kinsman complained to the chief that the beast[18] had not been paid. The chief replied that he did not want the cattle and that at the meeting he had wanted his wife's father to be merely cautioned. His kinsman said that despite this he would call the lieutenants who had taken the original decision and get them to ask the woman's father why he had not paid. Hearing this, the man offered a beast which was accepted.[18]

Thus it is the chief in his position as head of a major segment and a county who is honoured with beer and whose marriages are protected, and not the chief as a bibulous aristocrat. The chief himself does not drink all, or even any, of the beer presented to him but he is responsible for dispensing it. A chief who acts like a commoner and wanders through his villages seeking beer risks the reprimands of his lieutenants, for it is difficult to refuse a chief beer under those conditions. A chief should not visit his people's villages unless they invite him, or unless he has at least warned them of his intention.

The gifts received by a chief from returned labour migrants are sometimes cited as a modern form of tribute, but while these presents may be more expensive in pecuniary terms than beer, they do not have the same great social importance. The shirt or hat presented by a man recently back from Southern Rhodesia may bring him favourable attention from the chief, but the present is made by an individual and arises from his own political aspirations. So far as I could tell, such presents are not effective as bribes. On the other hand, the presentation of beer is an affirmation of a relationship between a social group, often a village or division, and a political office, and most of those affected directly

[18] At the meeting two beasts were asked for, but a year later only one beast was mentioned.

[19] cf. Barnes, *Marriage*, for the political significance of affinal ties.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

by this relationship participate in the presentation and consumption of the beer.

The religion of the Ngoni before the conquest was a cult of the Paramount Chief's ancestors. This cult has disappeared and all public religious activities are now conducted by members of the various Christian denominations, Roman Catholic, Dutch Reformed Church Mission, Anglican (U.M.C.A.), Seventh Day Adventist, and Watch Tower. There are a few adherents of other Christian sects who do not have churches in the Fort Jameson area and there are a few Moslems. There is little evidence to show how much the disappearance of the tribal religion has altered relations between the chief and his people. Most chiefs have some connexion with one or other mission, attend mission services from time to time and send their children to mission schools. The evangelists, deacons and elders of the churches act as leaders of the community in certain situations, particularly at funerals. Advancement within the ecclesiastical organization can be an alternative route to high status, but in most secular matters church leaders do not rival the chiefs. In church, chiefs are treated with respect and given seats of honour, while tribal and county meetings are usually opened with prayers led by a catechist or elder of the denomination to which the chief is attached.

The sanctions which people can use against their chiefs are diffuse rather than organized. If the conduct of a chief is regarded as outrageous, the senior lieutenants of his county segment and other traditionally important people may hold a small meeting in the chief's village and there rebuke him for his misbehaviour. If the chief has offended against one of his people, say by striking him, the lieutenants may tell the chief to pay a beast to the wronged man as damages. If it is a minor chief who is involved, the Paramount sends a messenger to the chief to reprimand or caution him. A chief who flouted the instructions of his lieutenants or Paramount in matters of this kind would lose a great deal of the support of his people on which his position ultimately depends. The common people themselves cannot take much direct action against a chief of whose actions they disapprove, but they can gradually drift away from him into other counties and they can refrain from sending him gifts of beer or from answering his calls for labour, and they may show their disapproval by not saluting him in the traditional manner. The Paramount Chief alone is saluted with the word 'Baiyete',[16] a salutation which symbolises his former position as head of an

[16] cf. Zulu *Inyosi*.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

independent group of Ngoni. Chibambo mentions how the use of this salutation was discontinued when the head of an erstwhile independent group rejoined his parent group.[14] In recent times people have indicated their disapproval of the Paramount Chief's actions by discontinuing this salutation temporarily.

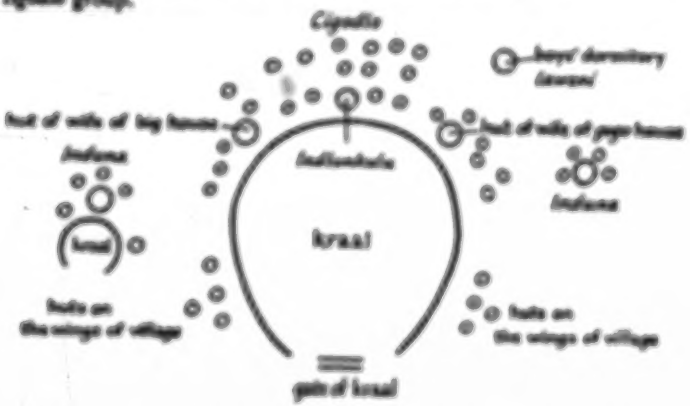
Despite the security of tenure provided by Administrative recognition, a chief still needs the support of his people. There is an Ngoni maxim, 'chieftainship is people',[15] and commoners are well aware that it is because they support their chief that he has high status. The simplest and most effective sanction that commoners can employ against their chief is to leave him. Movement from one county to another, from one tribe to another, and from the county to the town and back again is crucial in the working of modern Ngoni society. Not all these movements take place as the result of the unpopularity of chiefs, but this is one factor among many. Chibambo records an early example of people moving to segment 8 from the residue of segment 1 in order to share the hospitality of a newly appointed chief, but he goes on to say 'afterwards they found it wise to return to their proper division [segment]'.[16] In more recent times there are several examples, particularly among villages which entered Ngoniland after 1898 and who therefore largely lack segmental affiliation, of villages and clusters that have changed from one county to another for political reasons. More significant at the present time are the numbers of ambitious people who emigrate to the towns because, among other things, they cannot find advancement in the political hierarchy. The most striking instance of this is in the family of the late Mpezeni II. He had six sons who survived him. One is now Paramount Chief, and one is still a boy. The other four, including the chief's [illegible] are commoners in other parts of Africa.

5. *Royal hunts*

The royal hunt is the only occasion on which a county, or more usually a rural district or part of a county, functions as an economic unit. Even then the economic element in the enterprise is not very marked. The chief announces, through his messengers, that on such-and-such a day he will hold a royal hunt and that the men of such-and-such villages are to meet in a certain place. The procedure followed on the hunt is exactly the same as on an ordinary hunt, with the chief or someone nominated by him in tactical command, though the number of hunters is greater than on a hunt

[14] Chibambo, *My Ngoni*, p. 36. [15] [illegible]
[16] Chibambo, *My Ngoni*, p. 35.

621 the main circle round the kraal to emphasize its connexion with the *ciyalo* group.



621 The group referred to as 'a house' has already been defined in its
571 relation to the Paramount and his *kumpalo* village, and it will be illustrated and examined further in Chapter III of Part III. As an Ngoni institution the big house was an integral factor in the succession to high office, and the *gupo* house played an essential role in ceremonial and ritual life. Houses were also one of the most important components in village grouping. Men, women and children regarded themselves as associated with a house in one of three ways. They were related to it by descent or by marriage; or they were members of the family of the *induna* who looked after its affairs; or they served the house as servants or labourers, and were possibly the descendants of captives caught in [illegible] I think it often happened that the people living on the wings of the village had some relationship to the house on the side of the kraal where their huts were sited. There were many Ngoni villages where all the inhabitants were said to belong to one of the two or three or more houses, even though the majority of the inhabitants had no kinship or official relationship with a house.

614 The term 'clan' or 'clan descent group' has been used already many times and some explanation and definition is needed as a guide to its use in Part II before it is discussed further in Chapter II of Part III. The Ngoni considered that the clan of a person was of great importance for several reasons. The use of the clan descent name was the normal mode of address between all adults. The Ngoni said they could not speak to any stranger until they knew his clan name, and they used it in all social intercourse, except when addressing the Paramount. Exogamy was strict for people with the same clan name, and sexual relations between such individuals was regarded as incest.

national ritual of the first-fruits ceremony (*incwala*), which brought all the people to the royal village, was also abandoned before the Ngoni kingdoms were finally established, for no old person alive in the 1930's had seen the *incwala* ceremony.

(*d*) *The ceremonial pattern*

Ngoni songs and dances were performed without the accompaniment of drums and the words of the songs sung in the 1930's were in the Ngoni language. The war-dance, *ligubo*, was still danced at the royal village and at the funerals of Paramounts and Royal Sisters. The *ngoma* dance, performed after the harvest by young men and girls, was encouraged by the two Ngoni Paramounts, who endeavoured to prohibit other dances which were not of Ngoni origin.

Ceremonial dress, especially the war-dress of the men, was well preserved by heads of clans in the 1930's in the central Ngoni kingdom. In both kingdoms the Ngoni leading women wore their traditional bead ornaments on the head and neck and arms, and tied their cloths on festive occasions in the way in which their ancestors wore the long lengths of soft dressed leather.

Only in Ngoni families were to be found the making of milk curds (*amasi*), the cooked blood (*udubendo*), and the stamped maize (*izinkobe*), all of which were traditional foods brought by them from the south.

(*e*) *The linguistic pattern*

In the 1930's the Ngoni language had almost disappeared as a home language, except in Chief Mperembe's area in the northern kingdom. The majority of the older men could still speak and understand Ngoni, and nearly all the men who had been away to work in Southern Rhodesia or the Transvaal had renewed their knowledge of Ngoni or learnt to understand it from working with men who spoke Ndebele, Zulu or Swazi. The texts in this book from the northern kingdom were given in the Ngoni language and translated for me by Y. M. Cibambo. His own texts were written for me in English. The texts from the central kingdom were given in Nyanja and translated by me. The vernacular terms used in this book illustrate the continued use of Ngoni terms for traditional offices and objects, though in the central kingdom many of these were being replaced by Nyanja terms. Words of traditional songs, some ritual formulae, some forms of address, some titles of senior persons or groups —all these were in Ngoni. The younger generation, however, especially if they had not been south and heard Zulu or Ndebele, were not able to make any of the clicks, or to pronounce such double consonants as *dl* and *hl*.

The Ngoni were punctilious about etiquette, and especially about the linguistic terms required by good manners for greeting persons of different rank and seniority, thanking for gifts or for an audience, taking

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5
Maravi FR4
Tumbuka FR6

leave after meeting, withdrawing after a case in court, and initiating or concluding many other formal or less formal occasions. Children were taught to use the correct expressions and rebuked if they made a mistake, and it was one of the requirements in Ngoni families that a uniform standard of verbal politeness should accompany correct behaviour in posture.

CULTURAL AFFINITIES AND DIFFERENCES

The anthropologist working in Nyasaland is aware of the problems inherent in any attempt to isolate cultural features within any of the larger ethnic groups found there. There were no ethnographic field studies published of any of the other ethnic groups when I was working among the Ngoni. Mary Tew, in *Peoples of the Lake Nyasa Region*,[1] referred to scattered sources published before 1939, to which I had access; and from time to time Cewa informants wrote accounts of particular social institutions or ritual, from which I was able to make certain comparisons with Ngoni ritual and institutions. Some of the earlier accounts, such as that by Hodgson on the Cewa and Ngoni in the Dowa district,[2] assumed that all the cultural changes and 'borrowings' had been by the Ngoni from their Cewa neighbours, whereas I found in that area in 1939 Cewa villages where Ngoni cultural elements had been adopted.

Ngoni cultural affinities with South-eastern Bantu	*Local tribal differences*	
Paramount and subordinate chiefs	Chiefs; no central authority except in Henga and Ngonde	
Patrilineal descent Virilocal residence Marriage by *lobola*	Cewa and southern Tumbuka	Matrilineal descent, uxorilocal residence, marriage witnessed
	Henga	Patrilineal descent and virilocal residence
Clan exogamy " hierarchy Houses Age sets	Cewa	No clan exogamy " " hierarchy *Mbumba* group Girls' initiation schools
Cattle complex Ancestor cult associated with cattle	Tumbuka Cewa in Dedza district	Formerly cattle-owners but no terminology left and no association with ancestor cult
Burial customs: in skin near kraal	Cewa and Tumbuka	Graves outside village; buried in a mat

[1] Tew, M., *op. cit.*
[2] Hodgson, A. G. O. 'Notes on the Achewa and Angoni of Dowa District, Nyasaland.' *J. Royal Anthropological Institute*, 1933, pp. 126-62.

salutation being '*Amakhe amakhosi*', 'Eyes are white', or '*Buyani*', 'Return', along with the clan name. The answer was '*Yebo*' also with the clan name. This was the custom in the houses where there had been no death. The warriors of a village where there had been a death, either in the village or killed in war, took off their equipment on leaving the kraal and went to the house of mourning.

The warriors' sections went to the head villages of their districts to tell the news and show themselves. Those of Ekwendeni there; of Ezhigodhlweni there; of Elangeni there; of Emchewini there; but the sections from the villages of the *enukwada* went together first of all to show themselves to the head villages and then went to their own villages. After the army had broken up, those who had killed a man or had helped to kill a man began a purification of four or five days for they were considered to be unclean. After the time of greetings in the village, the elders came with the bark of certain trees which had been ground or crushed and put it in a frying pan. The frying pan was put on three hearth-stones by the fire, and water poured on. When the water began to boil the men came and began to 'lick the medicine', first one hand and then the other. The first lick they spat out, then they swallowed some, and struck their palms on their knees and on their elbows. They jumped from side to side of the frying pan and as they did so, they said '*Fv*'. This was said to drive away the spirits of the enemies whom they had killed because they were afraid that they might come to trouble them in sleep or night.

Very early in the morning they went to the river to wash off the paint, but they still wore the clothes of the man killed. This showed they were still being purified. They did not live with their wives or touch their children. When they returned from the river they tried to repeat the words they had heard their enemies say. Back in the village they took more of their medicine from the frying pan saying '*Fv*'. After that they rubbed themselves all over with lime wash.

On the last day they went to the river again but when they had bathed they burned all they were wearing, or hung them in trees. Only the good things were left: cloth, ivory bracelets, hoes and spears. The clothes of the killed they gave to the old people to wear. If water did not take off the paint on their bodies they rubbed on fat from cattle. Then the days of taboo were completed, they were considered to be clean, and could live with their wives and hold their children.

The decoration of heroes

After the warriors had been sent to the villages a short time passed, then they were called again together to dance the *Igodo*. On that day bulls were chosen to be killed for the army. Each section received a bull and it was killed by the hero of the section. While it was being skinned and cooked all the companies were dancing. When the meat was cooked and taken off the fire all the army was busied with eating it, each company by itself. When they had eaten the warriors began to get up one by one to dance and leap before their Paramount. Then the heroes of the sections were presented with the horns of the bull killed for the section. The horns had had holes bored so that bark-rope could be drawn through and they

2: Read E-S (1935-1939) 1956
FRS Ngoni FRS

second and third, and the finisher, at the place of dancing in the kraal. At such times each one whose called rose and danced singles, repeating his names. This was called *ukubiko isinkulipi*, reporting the heroes or the brave ones. This is still being done today. The *inkosi* thanked the people who brought the skins by giving them a beast or a goat. When they were dressing the meat and eating it, they kept on dancing *ligubo* and crying the war-cry. At such times the women were along with the men to help them dance *ligubo*. They made the responses to the songs and jerked their necks.

All such things the *inkosi* divided among his houses. The big house had a big share, but especially his mother's house. She should have most. Even if his real mother was dead, the big share had to go there, to her house, where her successor lived.

571 643 651 431 [565]

Visits to the Paramount, whether for a particular occasion or as a matter of routine, were hedged about with ceremonial. It was expected that *abenumzane* and other important people who lived near enough would visit the Paramount frequently and, according to some informants, they went every day in pre-European times.

643 574 576 644

No one could approach the Paramount except through one of the *izinduna* of the royal village, and the correct person to approach was the *induna* of the *indlunkulu*. Visitors were expected to wait at the gate of the kraal and put down their spears. When they were brought by the *induna* to the Paramount, they greeted him with '*Bayete*'. Then they sat down and the Paramount told the *induna* to greet them, and they replied '*Yebo, inkosi*'. This custom of indirect approach to the Paramount has been maintained. Early travellers in Nyasaland spoke of observing it, and when I was there it was considered outrageous manners on the part of any European if he penetrated immediately to the presence of the Paramount, without going through the accustomed channels.

643 644

The Paramount was both greeted and thanked for gifts of food, beer or snuff, with '*Bayete*'. If he moved from the kraal, all present said '*Bayete*'. If anyone had to leave his presence, he crouched low and murmured '*Bayete*' as he went out. Chiumbo described this punctilious formality of thanking for gifts in the Ngoni manner.

643 644 431

¶ When receiving presents the Ngoni thanked the giver by taking them with two hands, even though it was a small present. Afterwards they thanked the giver by his *inkungu*, clan name, openly. They said that receiving a thing with one hand showed that you disliked it and did not put any value on it. When receiving a present from bigger people or from a chief, superb words of respect were added to the *inkungu*, such as '*Baba*', '*Mkosi yawe*', '*E-Jere*'. Often the receiver if he was much pleased with the present added some *izinkhosa* to the clan name, if he knew them. Those near him or more further away helped the receiver by thanking loudly after him. If what he received was food, he thanked at the beginning, and after eating the food he thanked again. If such a present of food was given to a body of people, the leader in the company first led the others in

643 thanking, and then all thanked the thanking together. This included all
644 the men who were in the neighbourhood though they did not take part in
431 the feast or the present. The leader would first thank '*E-Jere*' and then all would follow together, '*E-Jere*', or the clan name of the one who was the giver. The Paramount, if he gave presents to the people, was not thanked by his clan name as other people. He was thanked by '*Bayete*' as was done when saluting him. Likewise those who received the title *Nkosa* were thanked by that title when they gave presents to people.

643 On ceremonial occasions, visitors to the royal village heard the
644 *izibongo* or praise-songs of the Paramount. These were songs referring
533 to great deeds and notable incidents both in the lifetime of the reigning
576 Paramount and in the lives of his predecessors. They were distinct from the *izinkomo*, which were honorific epithets added to the clan name and spoken when thanking a well-known man or woman for their gifts. The *izinkomo* could be said by anyone, since each person of note had his own which were well known. The *izibongo* could only be spoken or sung by an *undengi* or official 'praiser'. Such a person was a man of good
[822] memory and possessing eloquence. The chief was thought to be the seat of wisdom and eloquence, and a man who composed praise-songs, as distinct from repeating well-known ones, had to have the faculty of finding the right words, since new songs of this kind were generally invented on a sudden inspiration.

The occasions when the praise-songs were recited were when important visitors came to the royal village; when beasts were slaughtered in the ancestor cult; at special dances at the royal village or at the feasts of the Paramount. On such occasions the official praiser stood up in the head, everyone kept silence and did not move, and after a pause he began to call out '*Bayakonga inkosi*', 'let us praise the Paramount'. In reporting the praise-songs he began with those of the immediate ancestor of the Paramount, and then went on to those of earlier ancestors. At the end he shouted '*Bayete*' and all the people replied '*Bayete*'. Examples of the praise-songs of Zwangendaba and his father Hlazwayo of the northern kingdom and of Ngwane, father of Mpezu, of the central Ngoni kingdom are given at the end of the chapter.

643 The tension caused by the extreme formality in the behaviour of the
644 Paramount, his courtiers and his visitors was lightened by the presence
522 of a court jester. Informants were agreed that such an individual was usually present to amuse the Paramount with his antics and gestures and clown-like tumbling about. Dr. Laws referred to such a jester at the court of Mlanjwa I when the Livingstonia Mission was making its first settlement in northern Nyasaland.[1] I saw a jester who came with Paramount Ezrawilwa Mtawiko from Portuguese territory when he and his officials visited Mzokhaba for the war-dance at the mourning for Bamba

[1] Livingstone, W. P. *Laws of Livingstonia*. London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1921, p. 200.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FRS Ngoni FRS

the house. If my father came to my mother's house, I would go out, but if he sent for me I would return and he would talk to me and play with me. We learned how to behave well, and were rebuked if we behaved badly. My father would beat a child for not behaving well. My father did not allow his children to be spoiled by being treated differently from others. He said: 'They are all my children.'

Life of the Royal Women
by Mikeyane Nsengo

widow of Chimombo Jere, grandson of Zwangendaba in the northern kingdom

The *amakhosikazi* were not working. During the day they kept dressing their hair, both the young women and the old. The old women no longer kept their *isilabula*, or high chignon, but wore the *umoweo*, or long curls. For the *umoweo* the hair was cut short and not allowed to grow very long. Instead of dressing it upwards they took a blade of grass and kept it pressed down after oil and ochre were applied. Their other work was to go to the river and wash.

They also drank beer and some gruel, and afterwards danced *ngoma* in the house where beer was brewed. The *nunu* and *chief* also joined in the *ngoma* and the women were responding to the singing. They began to drink in the morning until the afternoon, but not in the evening. Other people went on drinking until evening, and even some of the *amakhosikazi* who were *isidli* (gluttonous) but the *nunu* were sleeping or resting.

When drinking in the house the *chief* always sat by the right-hand doorpost, and the big *inkosikazi* by the left-hand post. They sat near the door to draw breath easily because there were many people inside. The beer-pot being set halfway between the door and the fourth *umoweo* in the centre, a man was allowed to pour the beer in the gourds for drinking. He was called *umtendeki*, the beer-pourer, and was often the village *indoona* or one who was favoured by the *chief*. When the gourds were full he told the *chief*, and the *chief* told him to distribute them. Sometimes there were four or even six for the different classes in the house. They sat in order, the *inkosi* with the *intabekazi* and *umakhabi*, and the *inkosikazi* with the other wives of the *chief* and the wives of the *intabekazi* and *umakhabi*. The *chief* and the *inkosikazi* kept on inviting the common people to come and drink. Both invited people thanked the person at the beginning and at the end, others joining him. The *inkosikazi* or other wives of the *chief* were thanked 'Wena!'.

The *amakhosikazi* never worked at all, but the lower wives worked, and pounded grain and fetched firewood. These were the ones who had not yet got attendants in their houses. All the *chief amakhosikazi* had attendants who performed all the work of the house. The *amakhosikazi* often sat in the *umoweo* or outside under the platform of branches supported by posts. There they ate their food which was dumboi and *umqiqi*, thick gruel of millet, kaffircorn or sweet, bulrush millet ground to a paste, or *isitabula*, whole grains of maize boiled and pounded. The meat was eaten as a feast on the *ngoshozi*, the ornamental place in front of the house, and all the *chief*'s wives joined in. A mat was spread for the big *amakhosikazi* where they sat

clan and for women of leading Swazi and trans-Zambezi clans. Two of the texts emphasized the distinction conferred on the royal women by special clothing. Cibumbo described the use of well-dressed soft skins and of beads and wire, the beads brought with them from the south, the brass wire obtained from the Arabs. In NaNdumbo's text she mentioned cloth bought from the stores. After the Ngoni women gave up wearing soft leather for skirts and the long piece of leather draped from the left shoulder, they used strong cotton cloth of dark blue or black, originally brought by the Arabs and later stocked by the stores. They tied the main cloth under their arms in a draped knot over the breast and on ceremonial occasions they added another fastened on the left shoulder like a plaid. A woman who had been a young girl in the village of Paramount Cikusi, but was not of a leading clan, said that in this village there was a great difference between the royal women and the rest: 'Only the daughters of Cikusi and his big wives could wear dark cloth as the Ngoni do. The others would have been killed if they tried to look like the big women'.

The royal women and the big wives and widows of chiefs and *abenumzana* were treated by all with whom they came in contact with the distinction and respect due to their prestige. They were addressed and thanked by the term *Nkosi*, with the clan name and the honorific prefix added, except where, as in the case of Bambo Mazga, a title had been conferred, like was thanked '*Nkosi Bambo*'.[1] *Ukuhlonipa*, and its Nyanja equivalent *kulemekeza*, meaning to honour and to behave in a respectful manner towards senior people and those of superior rank, was an expression constantly used by the Ngoni and by the other peoples in the Ngoni kingdoms. The forms of showing respect were partly verbal; partly in the position adopted, with the eyes cast down and a slight curtsey by the women when facing someone; partly in the tone of voice when speaking; and partly in the deliberate and controlled behaviour noticed by several early travellers in Nyasaland. A particular verbal form of respect practised by the royal women was the use of the *Ishonipo* vocabulary. I found this practice surviving only in the Emtsweni area in northern Ngoniland where the Ngoni language was still spoken, but informants said that it had been common to all married women of trans-Zambezi clans in the northern kingdom when they had spoken Ngoni among themselves. The *Ishonipo* vocabulary consisted of the substitution of special words, known only to the women, in order to avoid using a word in which the main syllable of a man's name occurred—a man with whom they were connected by marriage or by official relationship.[2] Thus Zwangendaba's wives and widows could

[1] *Bambo* (father) was a term of respect used for important senior men.

[2] *Ishonipo* as a form of special vocabulary was widely practised among the Ngoni groups in South Africa. Ehrenreich, A. W., 'Social Organization', in *The Bantu-speaking Tribes of South Africa*, pp. 74, 77.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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never use any word in which *indaba* (meeting or affair) occurred. They substituted *mweyo* for *indaba* and spoke of him as Zwangumweyo. The women of the Ngumezulu clan could never use the word *dlanga* (sun) for which they substituted *jiba*, since Langa was the name of the father of Zwide who had married into the Ngumezulu clan.

Though the particular verbal form of *Ndonjwa* which the Ngoni royal women brought from the south survived only in one area of northern Nguniland, the concept inherent in it and the attitudes of honour and respect which it implied were expressed in the use of *Nkomo* in thanking and in the other non-verbal forms already mentioned. Mungo, the Royal Sister of Chauni, was as we have seen, thanked '*Nkomo Bambo*' but also with the formula '*Zikomo wotsuma wenkosi*' (thanks, child of the Paramount). Among the central Ngoni there were two expressions of thanks which were probably a relic of *Ndonjwa* vocabulary since they were used only by the leading women. The customary form of thanking, and of taking leave after a conversation or after getting a reply to a question, was '*Zikomo*' with the clan name and honorific prefix added. The royal women in this area, when making the response to this form of thanking, always replied '*Zaishwa*' with the clan name, and they thanked each other by '*Zimate*' with the clan name instead of '*Zikomo*'. When I observed this and used it myself, they nudged each other and said 'She also is one of us.'

We have discussed so far the outward signs of respect shown to the royal women, and the visible marks of distinction in their clothes and the number of their attendants. We shall now examine the way in which the authority of the royal women was exercised. This will give some indication of their relationship to the political organization of the kingdoms, in so far as they had certain responsibilities to the people as a whole, and to their husbands and sons within the royal village where they lived. At the royal village the Queen Mother and her co-widows shared with the wives of the two leading headmen to the right and left of the indlunkulu, the responsibility for preparing and serving food and beer for the Paramount and those whom he called to eat with him. The text by NyaNsanga[1] describes the etiquette of beer drinking in one of the chiefdoms in the northern kingdom, of sending food to the chief when he sat in the cattle kraal, and of assembling the wives in order of precedence according to their houses to take their food. The formality of this etiquette was characteristic of Ngoni eating and drinking, and it was maintained by the organization and forethought of the royal women, the big wives and mothers of the Paramount, who planned the work of their own households and supervised that of the lesser wives who were attached to the two main houses.

[1] The procedure described in the text applied equally to the Paramount's village and to the villages of ruling chiefs. The Ngoni in that area used the term 'inkosi' for chief as well as for Paramount.

and appeals were unknown. Chiefs did not allow a man to come by himself with his case to them, he had to come with his headmen. Even those in danger of death went first to the headmen and these brought them to the chiefs.

The Ngoni hated bribes. If any induna was found to have taken bribes from people he was condemned and punished.

The hearing of the cases was like what it is today. The one who brought the case to the court spoke first, then the one with whom he was quarrelling. If there were elders there from their village they also spoke telling out how these people quarrelled, saying so-and-so began to quarrel in such-and-such a way, and then showed how they had been unable to judge it in the village. They did not go into details of the quarrel, that was done by the men themselves. After those who had quarrelled had told of the beginning of the case any who knew of it were asked to say how it appeared to them in the village. These were the witnesses both for and against.

When this had been done, all who were implicated or concerned in the case remained silent. It is the custom of the Ngoni that all who spoke in a case should stand and have a stick, and as they spoke they should walk about and limp with the stick or sometimes stand all together, but in that case the hand which held the stick should shake and stick it into the ground. Only women spoke seated. No one at the hearing of a case was allowed to lie down, everyone, even the Paramount, sat. They did this because they were afraid that otherwise the case would not finish quickly. The court was held in the cattle kraal. Women were not allowed into the kraal for cases, but sat outside opposite where the old men were gathered, even though they were the wives of the Paramount.

After the litigants and the witnesses had spoken it was the turn of the elders of the court. They questioned and agreed with or criticised the men who had quarrelled but they did not pronounce judgement. They waited for the Paramount who first of all sat silent and noticed those who unravelled or twisted the case. Afterwards when the people had finished speaking, the elders delivered the story to the Paramount or judge. The judge then delivered his judgement and condemned those who had twisted the case. He delivered his judgement sitting not standing like the other people and when he had finished all thanked him, or rather saluted him with a loud 'Bayete' or with the surname if to lower chiefs. Sometimes he sent an elder to tell the court the judgement. When the case had been judged no one criticised the judgement. The one who began to give thanks for the judgement was the one who was found guilty; this he did to show submission and repentance. The custom of today that the one who wins the case gives the thanks is not good because the man who has lost goes away in resentment and threatening and often the case crops up again.

If an induna or man of standing were secretly to the Paramount to accuse somebody that he deserved death (perhaps for witchcraft), very often the Paramount sent a man in secret to warn the condemned man to run to a chief's village and hide his head. In this way many left their homes and went to build with the chiefs and where they went they took

all their things

574 603 came. One of these two officials usually came to greet them. He then informed the Paramount that strangers were present and took back the Paramount's greeting to them and asked their business. This was in turn reported to the Paramount, who arranged for their business to be taken care of and, if they were important people, sent an invitation for them to come to the *boma*, to which they were escorted by one of his officials and given seats. In due time the Paramount came out of his house and they gave him the *Bayete* and then he greeted them. As a rule he carried on all conversation through his *mfumu mwakuti*, and, after staying for a short time, often went back into the house and left his officials to entertain the guests. If the guests were visiting chiefs and elsewhere, word had gone round when they first arrived, and the senior men of the village, the *mabanda*, gathered to greet them, and sat in a group as they did for court cases. Such conversations of a social nature took place as a rule in the courtyard where chairs and mats were placed. If it rained or was very hot they went onto the verandah which ran the whole length of the house. Never, so far as I could discover, did visitors come into the house unless they were close relatives of the Paramount or his wife.

Women visitors who came with the men or by themselves went through the same procedure of announcing themselves and stating their business. Then, if they were important people, they were escorted to the courtyard at the back of the big house where they were greeted by the Paramount's wife and by her daughter, who then settled down to talk with them, either out of doors or on the back verandah, according to the weather. It was usual for the Paramount's wife and daughter also to go and greet the men visitors on the front verandah or in the courtyard. They did not stay, however, and if the visitors had come from far the Paramount told his wife, after she had greeted them, to 'catch a fowl'. When she returned to the back courtyard, children chased hens and there was squawking and yelling until the right number had been caught and killed. Pounding of maize began, the fowls were dressed and put in pots on the fire and other 'relish' was prepared of vegetables and groundnuts, and the flour was cooked to make porridge (*nsima*). The Paramount's wife and her helpers prepared the best pot-roast of chicken I have ever had. Food thus prepared was served to the guests on the front verandah in the traditional style, the porridge in food baskets (*mangwani*), the chicken and other relish in small covered pots. The Paramount offered the food to his guests and then withdrew into the house. When they received the food, as well as when they had finished eating, they thanked him with the traditional *Bayete* shout, adding, if they were of Swazi or trans-Zambezi clans, some of the praise names or *isibongo* of the Mzimba Paramounts. To European visitors, and occasionally to Christian Africans, tea was offered with milk and sugar.

574 603 Viewed from the back *banda*, where I lived and watched all this happening and listened to comments, it was evident that the never-ending

[p.11]

CHAPTER II

CLANS

In Chapter III of Part I we saw that the Ngoni clans had a particular role in their political and social organization. These clans had certain characteristics which distinguished them from the clans of the local peoples, and which they had in common with the Ngoni group of the South-eastern Bantu. The use of the clan name in address and in thanking for gifts, the strict exogamy in the clans, and the hierarchy of rank among the clans—these were all of southern origin. Mrs. Hamnett,[1] writing of the social organization among the northern Ngoni, said that the clan was called *isibongo*, 'a word referring more particularly to the name of the group'. The Ngoni spoke of their clan name as their *isibongo*, and they generally added 'that is my thanking name'. Dr. Kuper[2] said the term clan for 'the farthest extension of kinsmen traced through the father or the mother'. She referred also to the sub-division of clans among the Swazi—a process of fission by which a section of a clan was known by a double name, so that the Nkosi clan became the Nkosi Ginsinsa, the Nkosi Mamba, with other sub-divisions. These divisions eventually became recognized as separate clans, so that marriage could take place between them, and so that the heads of the sub-clans could achieve independence from the head of the original clan. It is possible that some development of this kind took place after the Ngoni left Natal for, as we shall see later in this chapter, there were among the Ngoni a number of clan names which they said emphatically were Swazi but which were not among those noted by Dr. Kuper[3] or by Bryant.[4] In tracing the early history of the Swazi Dr. Kuper[5] distinguished between two periods the first, when small patrilineal clans were migrating southwards, and the second, when rival clan heads became petty chiefs having non-clansmen among their subjects. At the beginning of their northward march Zwangendaba and Ngwane, in addition to being military leaders, were petty chiefs of this type, each including among his followers members of his own clan as well as others.

The Swazi became a heterogeneous nation composed of people from over 70 clan descent groups, of which one-fifth were true Swazi, one-seventh were prior inhabitants of the territory, and the rest were migrants into the kingdom. The clan hierarchy which was part of the structure of the nation showed, as Dr. Kuper[6] pointed out, 'some connexion between the rank of a clan and the period at which it was

[1] Hamnett, A. W., 'Social organization', in *The Bantu-speaking Tribes of South Africa*, p. 80.
[2] Kuper, H., *An African Aristocracy*, p. 11.
[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 111.
[4] Bryant, A. T., *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal*, pp. 180–90.
[5] Kuper, H. *op. cit.*, p. 11.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 113.

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break up into smaller villages, and there were on the whole more villages in the north said to be *wakunja limodzi* (of one family) than among the central Ngoni. On the other hand, the *banungwale* pattern of village division had almost disappeared among the central Ngoni.

A man on his first marriage built a hut for his wife behind his mother's hut, where his brothers by the same mother or by mothers of the same house also built. The family grouping by residence was therefore determined by house affiliation. Associated with this residential group based on kinship, there were the residences of the *indona* and his family which had separate alignments on a kinship basis, though for certain common purposes they combined with the family groups related to the house by kinship. The children of the families belonging to the house and the children of the *indona* who took care of it began to intermarry when the prohibitions on marriage within the village ceased to operate. In this way kinship bonds were created within a group which formerly had only residence and certain activities in common, and this process was recognizable in a number of the larger villages, especially in the central kingdom.

Within the different types of family groups determined by their residential basis there were certain outstanding relationships between members of the same family. The most important of these was that between father and children; the father, as the biological parent and also the symbol of authority, was the focus of honour and respect, and the one who helped his children when they were in need. The relation between the father and his children among the Ngoni was always a balance between affection and care, and respect and authority. The ideal person of a father, as described by informants, included all these elements and also wisdom. This concept of the father relationship was extended to the head of a *banja*, to the headman of a village or a section of a village, to a *mukumanene* in charge of an area, to a chief, and to the Paramount himself. The Ngoni greeting to all older men, and the most respectful form of address to a man of any seniority, was *baba*, father, or its Nyanja equivalent *bambo*.

The mother, on the other hand, had a more limited relationship within the family circle. To her own children and to the children of her co-wives, especially of her house, she was the provider of food, and the affectionate 'cherisher'[1] of young children; but she was also treated with respect and, when she reached some seniority, she had considerable authority over her daughters and her younger co-wives. She could never compete, however, with the sisters of her husband or with his mother, who expected to exercise authority over her children and to arrange for the ceremonies connected with birth, puberty, and marriage. In villages where virilocal residence was the rule, the husband's sisters were married elsewhere and were only present in the village during

[1] *Sukwa*, lit. to cherish, is the word used for bringing up children.

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
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561 884 affairs unless they were exceptionally vigorous mentally and physically, or the kind of dominating personality who could not be overlooked. It was evident also that individuals of weak character or evil disposition were not included in the group. I saw one or two such persons who bore a bad reputation in village society turned away from a senior group which was talking over a difficult village affair, with the caustic comment: 'Who is that worthless one? We cannot know him.' On the other hand, on social occasions when food or beer was being dispensed, all the old ones and the less reputable ones would be given their share, though sometimes with a cutting remark about the people who never missed a party but never did any work.

Selection in the senior age sets was intended to show that only persons who could be trusted, that is who were of known good character, were qualified to supervise the growing up of boys and girls, for whom the village elders as a group felt responsible. The maintenance of Ngoni standards of behaviour in young people was in the hands of this older group, who could and did exercise authority over and above that of the family and house. There were no more ardent supporters of Ngoni behaviour patterns than some of the older men and women of Ntumbu clans in the central kingdom who had been brought up in the houses of Bwazi or trans-Zambezi clans, and were recognized as *mwinis* and *mukolo* in their villages.

561 576 Among the younger people below the group of elders, it was common to hear them address each other as *mwapo yami*, or *mwanapo*, 'my age mate'. Boys shouted it at each other on the cattle ground, young women called to each other in these terms when pounding maize, and when on a visit as an *ngoma* dance team it was a frequent form of address among the youths and girls. There was inherent in that form of address an idea of relationship, an absence of seniority or inferiority, and an acknowledgement of a tie which went beyond that of the family or house or clan. It was most commonly used within a village, but it was sometimes used between young people of different villages.

561 972 Within these groups of youths and girls and among young married men and women, there was a recognized friendship relation, *ubwenzi*, which existed as a rule between pairs of individuals of the same sex and age. It was sometimes a continuation of a playmate companionship, sometimes an expression of the need of a young boy in a *kraal* or a young married woman for a confidante or sympathizer. Most often it was a spontaneous specialized liking for another person, expressed invariably through an exchange of small gifts and generally of confidences, and often by going off together to bathe or out forward or catapult small birds. Such friendships were said as a rule to be permanent, though girls and women sometimes referred contemptuously to someone as 'She was my friend. Now she hates me and does not give me anything.' The decision to go off in search of work was often taken

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In the central kingdom there were two instances of a modern adaptation of the ancestor cult, both of which were evidence of its close links with the aristocratic tradition; one related to a *mukwawawa* of a Swazi clan, the other to the royal clan. One of the first things which caught the eye of a visitor to the village of Mankhatha was a large circular brick and cement tomb with a wooden cross on the top, in the middle of the village by the main kraal and within sight of the ruling chief's hut. It was the tomb of Njokomolo Nzunga I, son of Gokomolo Nzunga who gave the cattle for NaMlangeni's *lobola*, and father of the ruling Chief Njokomolo Nzunga II. The idea of this memorial originated with Lopazi Nzunga, younger brother of Njokomolo I and head of the *gqqa* section of the village, and he had organized its erection. The bricks and cement were given by Europeans in the neighbourhood, and three beasts were killed for meat for those who carried the materials. The money to pay for the bricklayers' wages was raised by the sale of another beast. The name on the wooden cross was cut by the Chief's brother-in-law who was a carpenter, and Lopazi said that the cross was for writing the name on and had no Christian significance. The tomb was declared 'open' to the public in the presence of a large number of people. A beast was presented to the Paramount Chief, and another beast was killed and cooked for a feast in the village. Beer was brewed in the huts of the two leading widows who had been in the big house and second house of Njokomolo I.

This tomb was a memorial and not a grave, for Njokomolo I had been buried in Ngoni fashion on the edge of the kraal, the fence of which was enlarged to take in the grave. It was regarded as a central point in the village. Ngoni visitors saluted it as they went by with the right arm upraised in Ngoni fashion, and war-dances and *ngoma* dances took place beside it. The idea of a brick tomb with a cross on top was of course a modern concept taken from European cemeteries in Nyasaland which Lopazi had seen. It cost six cattle to put it up and 'open' it, and these cattle were taken from the herds of the big house of Njokomolo I.

In the chapter on the Paramount (Part II, Chapter III) it was pointed out that in the central kingdom the Paramount Gomani I was slain as a result of the 'war with the English' when he refused to walk to Zomba for his trial. On the Zomba road near the turning to the mission station of Domasi was a track leading into some woods. In an open clearing was a brick and cement tomb to Gomani I, subscribed to by the central Ngoni (including those living in the towns of Blantyre and Zomba). A memorial fund called 'The late Gomani Memorial Fund' was opened in 1926, and three years later those who had organized the fund formed the Angoni Highlands Association, mainly of Ngoni working in Blantyre and Zomba and wishing to maintain their links with their home villages. In discussing the origin of this fund for the memorial informants pointed out that they were aware that Gomani I, unlike his father and grand-

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194 families. It was, however, demanded from Ngoni children
563 that they should behave in the socially approved manner to
[867] everyone, and not only to their Ngoni kin and fellow clans-
men. And it was evident in non-Ngoni families that there was
often some attempt to teach Ngoni standards of behaviour
to their children, but that such attempts broke down when
their family system was not organized to enforce the neces-
sary training.

● 576 *The goals of Ngoni child training*

577 Ngoni adults, and especially the senior men and women who
[867] were in control of the training of children and themselves
deeply conscious of the traditional values of their society,
summed up the aims of the upbringing of children in one
word 'respect'. The vernacular term *ulemu*—in the old
Ngoni language *klenipe*—is a concept very difficult to trans-
late adequately, certainly to convey its full meaning in a
single English word or phrase. The nearest terms are honour
and respect, and though in some contexts it is often trans-
lated as politeness, that is too limited a term. In fact they
had another vernacular term to express courtesy which was
to them one way of showing respect. The concept of *ulemu*
included the recognition that a particular person or office
was entitled to honour; that all behaviour to that person
must express respect; and that by showing respect in langu-
age, gesture and action, a child or adult so behaving, shared
in that honour which they were acknowledging. Conversely,
through failing to convey respect, a person, whether child
[559] or adult, was 'ashamed' and lost face accordingly. I have
just said that a particular person was entitled to honour and
therefore to respect in the behaviour of others. The Ngoni
said that was the origin of the concept, and it was demon-
strated in the punctilious observance of etiquette to all
chiefs, and to all leading men and women by everyone else.
[858] But there was an extension of this concept to include all
older people, and Ngoni children were expected to show

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respect to all adults, whether Ngoni or not, whether of their family, or helpers in the household, or former captives. If children did not so behave to old and poor people, they were punished and made to feel ashamed as if they had failed to honour their own relatives.

A Ngoni elder when speaking of the testimony of early travellers in Ngoniland to the good manners found in Ngoni households said: 'Such honouring of each other came to the Ngoni because they liked living together without any muttering as was the custom of other Nyasaland people. . . . . Such honour was not shown by young people for fear of being beaten, but because all children were well taught that this behaviour was right and proper for the upbuilding of the land.'

The emphasis in this quotation is clearly on the connexion between personal behaviour and the integrity and prosperity of the Ngoni kingdom. When Ngoni elders were talking about child training and its effect on the future of the Ngoni people, they made constant reference to 'those who spoil the land'. The phrase was the same as taking the roof off a hut, i.e. destroying it for the purpose for which it was built. This determined emphasis on behaviour illustrated the Ngoni intention of regulating personal contacts within their society, so that harmonious relations would build up the society which quarrels and factions would destroy, and indeed had partly destroyed in some of the historic secessions from the kingdom. Harmonious personal relations are perhaps the covert if not the overt aim of all human societies from the individual family outwards. We see this however in sharp outline in Ngoni life, partly because they were acutely aware of the vulnerability from external influences of their society and way of living.

Two very ancient folk-tales illustrate Ngoni thinking about keeping their kingdom and society intact and maintaining their code of polite behaviour.

The first was taken down by me from a very old man who

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The moral, which was always repeated at the end as part of the story, was that children were warned not to show unkindness to people but to treat them well so that people would bless them. They were reminded that the older sister showed the qualities of pity, courage and obedience, while the younger sister did not hesitate to display disgust and fear and carelessness. It was the older sister who had her ultimate reward in leading wife of a handsome chief, while the younger sister, as a subsidiary wife, had to take second place.

These two folk-tales were popular among the children, even though they were so different from the animal folk-tales, full of humour and absurdities. The children used to shiver with excitement over the Bean-Rod story, especially the little girls, and the boys sucked in their breath when the wind blew and snapped their fingers for the rattling in the pit. Because the stories were serious and had a didactic purpose, Ngoni fathers approved of them, and encouraged the grandmothers to tell them often in order that the children might remember the moral.

Learning how to behave

Ngoni villages, like the whole Ngoni kingdom, had an efficient system of communication between individuals and groups, but whereas the kingdom had a network of official messengers continually moving between the capital and the outlying sections, the village 'intercom' depended on the children. At any time of day, from first light till after dark, children were moving about the village from one hut to another, from a hut to the kraal gate, taking messages, summoning people, carrying food, reporting arrivals. The messages and summons were all at the bidding of the adults. When a child was called to take a message, he had to respond immediately wherever he was, and run to hear what he was wanted for. Someone calling a child's name, followed by a long drawn out 'Yo—o—o', punctuated all the hours of daylight in a village. When a child was told to call someone

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older, on reaching them he had to bend one knee, or sit down, and say in a low but clear voice: 'They are calling you.' If a child was sent to call another child to his father because he had a scolding to administer, the bad child had to listen with head bent down, not saying a word or making a sound, until the father had finished all he had to say, whether the accusation was just or not. If the child forgot himself and answered back or made excuses, the onlookers would beat the child for being rude to his father. If when taking a message a child had to pass a line or a group of people, he had always to go in front of them, never behind, bending forward from the waist and murmuring as he went by, 'I am before your eyes.' If a child had to give an adult a food basket or any other object, he had to offer it with both hands and bend slightly over it; and when he received it back he always did so with both hands outstretched and bent head.

Acting as messengers constantly, and no child was immune from being called if he or she was in the village, impressed on children from their early years the chief behavioural skills of language and deportment. Taking a message was always a formal occasion, and standards of behaviour in language, posture and gesture were rigidly enforced. We shall see in later chapters how very small children were first taught to thank people for gifts or in response to a greeting, and later to greet people politely themselves. The correct terms in which to address or to refer to relatives formed another stage in learning language skills, and later on came reminders about the use of pronouns and the use of the second person singular and plural of verbs, the first to equals only, the second to all adults, with the third person plural for chiefs and 'great ones'. About the age of five or six a child was told: 'When your mother speaks to a stranger she says "Please (you) sit here". You should speak like this to all people you must honour. Only rude people speak that other way—people who do not know how to thank and how to honour, not like the Ngoni who know these things.' [191]

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men's affairs. The kind of topics discussed by men at the kraal gate included hunting, in the right season; cases heard in the courts and the application of Ngoni law to all subjects of the Ngoni chiefs; the organisation of village affairs from tax collecting and dealing with tax evaders to beer drinks and burials and building houses; the sales of cotton, tobacco and cattle at near-by markets and the current prices; the various labour recruiters combing the villages for likely young men and the latest stories brought back by men who had returned from working in the south. Every now and then, particularly when the talk ranged round decisions in the courts or adding to the herds of cattle, references were made to the Ngoni past, to their relations with Europeans, both missionaries and officials, and to the behaviour of the non-Ngoni groups in the Ngoni kingdoms. The older boys listened attentively and as we shall see later in Chapter VII acquired among other things an extensive knowledge about the needs and uses of cattle. The younger ones pricked up their ears now and then when a familiar name or event was mentioned, and stored up questions to ask their father at a time when he was willing to listen and answer.

There was the usual Ngoni formality about where people sat at the kraal gate. The most senior men sat on each side of the opening, leaning up against the gate-posts, with the rest in decreasing order of rank as they were further from the gate. The cleared space on each side of the gate and in front of it was all known as the 'gate of the kraal'. The craftsmen who were carving wood or twisting bark rope, making baskets or plaiting mats, sat according to their age and rank on the edges of the senior group or among them. They could have carried on their trade anywhere, but they preferred the company of their fellows and did not want to miss listening to the talk or the arrival of strangers. The herd-boys, when they were present, were on the extreme edges of those sitting there, divided into two groups, 'younks' and boys. Each group made its own fire for boiling milk and roasting sweet potatoes or ground-nuts.

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generally assumed that everything was 'dirty' which was not hygienically clean. The Ngoni resented this, all the more because of their cultural insistence on decency and order, and on certain forms of external cleanliness.

Their huts, furniture and mats were often infested with ticks and bugs—neither of which the Ngoni liked, regarding them as rather disgusting. The old remedy was to leave the tick-infested site and burn the objects full of bugs. As villages became more stationary and property accumulated in the huts, and became more valuable and expensive, they built strangers' huts for visitors who might otherwise infest their own. Bugs were dealt with by bringing all bedding, mats and bedsteads out into the sun and pouring boiling water on them again and again.

Similarly it was an aesthetic disgust rather than hygiene which made them insist that there should be no spitting or nose-blowing on the floors of huts or verandas. Such actions had to take place outside, and vehement comments were made when a visitor forgot his manners in this way. An ingenious tiny iron spoon with a long handle was used by the older Ngoni for cleaning the ears and nose.

Perhaps nothing showed the Ngoni pleasure in and desire for cleanliness so clearly as the quick and apt excuses made when standards were obviously in temporary abeyance. There was no doubt that young men and girls liked looking clean and well-groomed. The daily wash in the river with soapy leaves, followed by rubbing on fat or oil made the skin glisten. We have talked already about the use of twigs as tooth-brushes, the rinsing of the mouth before and after meals, and the use of astringent fruit to make the mouth feel clean.

The same scrupulous attitude about cleanliness was seen in the washing of dishes, spoons and cooking-pots after each meal. It was almost as if the standard of housewifery was proclaimed by the sight of food baskets, gourds, spoons, etc., spread on the platform outside the hut to dry. Washing up

§14 621 the villages of certain chiefs in the south were preserved.[1] In Mwamlowy's country there are the names of villages belonging to nine generations of Jere chiefs, and in Gomani's country for seven generations of Maseko chiefs. Villages holding these historic names are in charge of an individual of high rank who is never called the 'owner' of that village but 'the one who takes care'. I realized how clear to the people is the historical significance of these village names, when I asked a question and they exclaimed, 'What? You do not know about Elangeni being the village of Hlathwayo? But all Ngoni people can know that.'[2]

§14 614 [98] 574 4. Clan names. The clan names, as the Ngoni say, denote a person's 'tribe' and the respect due to him. With the prefix, *e, a, ou* (according to the sex) the clan name is used as a respectful form of address, and always when thanking for a gift or favour. The tone of reverence with which the great clan names are thus mentioned is itself an indication of the rank and honour of a person.

§14 621 5. Village descent. In old days Ngoni villages were very much larger than to-day. The headman of a village on your first visit will always give you the genealogy of his village, how it split off from A, which split off from B, which was the *chigwa* under *induna* X of the big village of chief Y. Reciting these village genealogies generally leads to some recalling of the past, and the village notables, the *amadala*, gather round to corroborate or correct the headman's recital.

§14 It takes very little to stimulate the Ngoni to historical conversations. I have heard them originate in the return of a villager from Johannesburg, where he met Zulu and Swazi men and found they could speak together and had common traditions; in a sermon preached by an Ngoni minister in which he used illustrations from Ngoni warfare; in a rebuke from the Boma to a headman for trying to move his village from worn out land to a site outside the Reserve on an empty farm. And it is not only the aristocrats who take part in such conversations. Sometimes it is evident that men and boys whose [619] fathers had been slaves are anxious to show their knowledge of Ngoni history in order to prove their unity with the true Ngoni.

[1] I am not clear yet what was the precise sociological process by which the identity of these villages was preserved.

[2] An idiomatic one which has the force of a double negative 'No one cannot know it'.

(19) The *isi-bongo*[1] "Jere," appears to have definitely not been used prior to the year 1830, and from information received it is extremely unlikely that it was in general use until after the death of Zwangendaba. The chief *isi-bongo* up to that time appear to have been Ramula, Ngumuya, Tole (said to be the eye of an ox), Xaima, Gama, Mkulupi, Ndhlovu, and Mzizi.

The subsidiary[2] ones little used were Mdala and Ntungwa.

The language spoken by the Ngoni was closely allied to isi-swazi.

The Paramount Chief, Mpezeni II, still receives the royal salute of "Bayete" on all official occasions and in his own house.

(20) Ba-Pale people. It is stated that, when the Ngoni first met these people, they carried long spears and shields made of game hides, and they could converse with the Ngoni in isi-swazi, which was not the language of the Ba-Pale; when they spoke their own language they were not understood by the Ngoni. The general opinion of the old indunas is that they were Bahoto people. They supplied excellent fighting material to the Ngoni impis and were treated as equals.

INTERESTING NOTES OF DEATH OF LOBENGULA.

Lobengula, Chief of the Amandebele. It is stated as follows.

Lobengula crossed the Zambesi at Mosyoone Drift and arrived at the Mzingwani (Tin Mines) village on the Luturukwe River in January, 1894. He was carried by an Ngoni party who had been sent for that purpose. He was a very heavily built man with a large protruding belly, and became like those of a woman heavy in milk. So cumbersome was he, that he had to be helped to move about from one place to another. He had a great pipe in which he smoked hemp. If he passed the pipe he would talk, but if not it was a sign he wished to be alone. When Chief Mpezeni visited him he used to stand on his hands and knees to greet him. The day Lobengula died the rock on the Nanjika Kopje split and fell and all the great Ngoni indunas mourned. Nanjika is on the road between Fort Jameson and Fort Manning. I have seen the split and fallen rock.

It is not known where Lobengula was buried; as he was a fugitive from justice, the secret was closely kept. It is said he died shortly after his arrival from the Zambesi in 1894. This information was given by an aged Ngoni councillor, named Kopa, who resided near Fort Jameson, and died in 1937. This story is but little known and usually all knowledge is denied of this subject.

List of people who, being the oldest living Ngoni, attended a meeting held on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, 16th, 17th and 18th of January, 1936, at the Paramount Chief's village to discuss the history of Chief Zwangendaba:—Headmen Ambo, Mzungwa Ndhlovu, Mabwanga Ndhlovu, Mabuto Moyo Nkomo, Gwabi Tole, Mpiko Ndhlovu(a) Jere, Mabandabanda Tembo, Mwenje Ndhlovu, Kalimula Mangwana Nkomo, Kapondeka Jumbe Mzizi, Mandabwa Ndhlovu, Chimangadzaza Ngulowa, Chimoto Mabuka, Mambo Jere, Mpezeni Ndhlovu, Chief Mpezeni Jere II, Chief Mankhamba, Andrew Kapatamoyo Jere, Jeremy Mdolomba Gwaza, Mabuto Kampyoto Ndhlovu, Prospect Mzizi, Adrijano Phiri, Mabandabanda Cartman Mwenje, Chimpalakasa Gwaza, Paya Mzizi, Mpezeni Magwa Jere, Mabuto Ndhlovu, Mzizi Lukhalo, Kpambeni Tembo, Mabandabanda Mwenje, etc.

[1] [isi-bongo = Sib name - Analyst]

[2] [isitakazelo = honorific epithets -- Analyst]

/5 cont'd/

614 Clan names, however, are inherited from the father in most Ngoni
551 families. These names are used as surnames for the purposes of the
596 Administration, and as forms of polite address. On marriage, a man
438 and wife may live in either the village of the man or of the woman,
591 although the custom whereby initially they should live in the village of the woman for a few years is still followed by some.

III

361 In the village there are dwelling huts, storehouses, pens for the small animals, drying platforms, and cattle byres. The huts are often arranged in rather uneven parallel lines, with all the huts facing
351 the same way. The fences found in other parts of the country enclosing a small courtyard round the hut, are not often seen here.
342 Each married woman has her own hut, and possibly a smaller hut as
413 well, used as a kitchen and sleeping place for visitors and children. Unmarried adolescents of one sex sleep together in modest huts they
882 have built for themselves or else in a hut left empty by a former resident. Where bamboos are available, as in the north and east of
342 the area, they are used to form the framework of a circular hut. The
[624] walls are made in two concentric circles, with mud plastered on the inside of the inner circle, but with the outer circle often left unmudded. The walls are made in unbroken circles, doorways being cut out later with an axe. The space between the two circles is used
[353] for storing pots and other household goods and is sometimes used for cooking. The bamboos are woven together, split bamboos going horizontally and unsplit ones vertically, so that light is able to pass through the unplastered wall. Open lattice fencing is also found forming part of the outer wall.

Where bamboos are not available, either circular or rectangular huts of poles and mud are made. Rectangular huts are often subdivided with a partition wall, to make a separate sleeping place, while the verandah may be partly walled in to make a cooking shelter protected from the weather. With both bamboo and pole huts, the

/11 cont'd/

241 The busiest time of the year in the garden is at the beginning
[136] of the rains, when there is much work to be done planting and weed-
ing, and scaring away the monkeys and wild pigs. Later on, in the
new year, after the garden has been weeded twice, it is possible to
think of enlarging the garden at one edge, and if it is not too late,
the newly cleared portion may be planted with a catch crop. Weed-
ing and clearing new ground are both activities that are carried out
[496] to some extent co-operatively, either on a mutual help basis between
two women, or more frequently in return for beer provided by the
owner of the garden. On the day before the party, a few men and
women come to the garden and do their share of the work in advance,
in the belief that it is better not to have to work and drink on the
same day. The next day, the bulk of the party arrive at the garden,
and the wife of the owner brings out a pot of beer from the village.
When the first half of the garden has been finished, there is a pause,
and the beer is drunk. On completion of the whole garden, the party
returns to the village and drinking begins in earnest. It is not nec-
essary to have worked in the garden to be able to attend the subse-
[373] quent drinking, and the well-mannered host will specifically set
[574] aside certain pots of beer for those who have not been to the garden.

/12/ Towards the end of the rains, there is less cultivating to be done, but the ravages of wild animals become more serious, and many families sleep for two or three months in the garden, returning to the village only to obtain food. Garden shelters are simple open-sided affairs with a thatched roof, but those owners who intend to
[342] sleep in their gardens for a long time, build small circular huts as in the village, or conical shelters with the roof reaching to the ground.
[414] A few lookout platforms built in trees are used as vantage points for spotting wild animals. If a man has a garden a long way from the village, particularly across a stream which will be in spate in the late rains, he may build a byre for his cattle at the garden.

Maize and ground-nuts are the first crops to be harvested, and later finger millet, root crops, and finally kaffir-corn. Maize is
251 stooked before the cobs are removed, and these are then dried on platforms before being carried to the village to be stored.

13:Fraser M-5 (ca. 1890) 1901
FRS Ngoni FRS

borne out in Roman days also, that the handier, and more artful and skilful people have usually a lower social morality than the fighting races. Our Ngoni came to Nyasaland as a moral blessing. The ordinary obscenity of the indigenous people was not for a moment tolerated among the Ngoni. It is very appalling to hear and see how degraded were the Tumbuka into whose land they came. A people among whom virginity was unknown, where family relationship was no defence, where men and women lived in an atmosphere that was charged with vice. But when the Ngoni came, many of the foul practices of the Tumbuka were punished with death. Their obscene dances were prohibited, many of their superstitious customs were banned, and generally a higher type of morality was superimposed.

The aristocratic Ngoni is a gentleman through and through. His word is absolute. When he gives a promise you may confidently rely on it. He does not steal, nor does he intrude on your privacy. I have heard the old men storm in a village because some boys stood around staring at me, or speaking. Before a superior they should sit down, and remain silent, or only speak in whispers. When they address you they always give you your family name of honour, or if they don't know it, round off each sentence with a "sire." When you come into a village you sit at the gate of the cattle kraal and wait for your reception. After a long time the elders of the village appear. Their courtesy is that the longer the wait the greater the welcome. For if they come out quickly they seem to say you had better clear out quickly. When they appear they sit down at some distance, and remain silent. You must not speak till you are spoken to. After a decent interval, they come forward, sit down, and leisurely say, "We see you, sire." Then you reply, "Yes, sire." That is the whole courtesy. Conversation may now begin. When you would rise to go, you first of all say, "Remain in peace, sire," and they reply, "Yes, and go thou in peace, sire." It is very courteous and friendly, and they accompany you along the path a little way, and again send you off with salutation.

Their village life is not without interest and amusement. During the day in the head villages there are continual trials in open court—trials which last for hours and days with continual speech-making. In the evenings the kraal echoes with the chorus of village dances. Quite the prettiest and most delightful dance is the village competitive dance which is held during the day. A